

CHAPTER 1

THE STATE OF LOCAL CORRECTIONS IN CALIFORNIA

Local Detention System Profile

California's 456 adult jails and 116 juvenile halls and camps play a critical role in the state's correctional system. When arrested, adults are booked into county or city jails, and minors into county juvenile halls. The most serious offenders remain in these local detention facilities awaiting court disposition of the charges.

Local detention facilities also confine persons after court sentencing or adjudication. Almost two-thirds of all convicted adult felons serve county jail time (usually up to 12 months) as part of a felony probation sentence. Likewise, courts frequently place juveniles who committed felonies in local juvenile detention facilities that keep offenders close to home and provide them with necessary education and treatment programs involving the ward and family.

To ensure that state and local policymakers have access to critical information about California's adult jail population, the BOC conducts a monthly survey that provides a comprehensive picture of the number of inmates in local jails, their status, and related issues. In fulfilling this mandate, the BOC – in collaboration with local agencies – collects pertinent data from all 58 counties and reports this data quarterly to counties and annually to the Legislature. Appendix A provides results of the 1997 Jail Profile Survey, which included the following county jail findings:

- ✓ 1.19 million people were booked into California's county jails;
- ✓ 77,633 jail inmates were in custody per day (average daily population/ADP) and the system had a single day population high of 83,845 (exceeding the number of board rated beds, which is 70,963);
- ✓ 70 percent of the jail population were either charged with or convicted of a felony;
- ✓ the ADP was comprised of 55,288 inmates charged with felonies, 21,099 charged with misdemeanors, and 1,246 unspecified;
- ✓ 49 percent of inmates were classified as requiring maximum security confinement;
- ✓ 58 percent of jail inmates were awaiting trial or disposition, and 42 percent were serving a jail sentence imposed by a court;
- ✓ the total ADP included 39,584 non-sentenced males and 27,927 sentenced males, 5,443 non-sentenced females and 4,679 sentenced females, and 129 juveniles (all male and all non-sentenced);

- ✓ 22 counties representing over 68 percent of the jail system's ADP were operating under court-ordered population caps which place a ceiling on admissions and require the early release of inmates;
- ✓ 274,047 inmates were released early due to population caps and lack of bed space;
- ✓ 10 percent of jail inmates were undocumented aliens; and
- ✓ over 2.6 million arrest warrants (including 251,567 felony warrants) were unserved.

Counties were unable to provide the BOC with information on specific booking charges, date and time of booking releases, and operating costs by facility. However, aggregate data on jail and juvenile facility capital and operational costs are available (see pages 6-7).

The BOC separately collects and reports data on city jails and sheriff's substations (Type I facilities). For fiscal year (FY) 1997/98, this process resulted in the following profile:

- ✓ 497,794 people were booked into California's city jails (9 percent were juveniles);
- ✓ 1,891 inmates were in custody per day (ADP), with a single day population high of 3,899;
- ✓ 35 percent were booked on felony charges and 53 percent on misdemeanor charges (the remainder were in jurisdictions unable to specify); and
- ✓ 8,562 inmates were transferred to another facility solely for medical/mental health reasons.

In FY 1995/96, the Legislature transferred responsibility for local juvenile detention facilities from the California Youth Authority to the BOC. Working in partnership with local agencies, the BOC developed a survey in 1997 for collecting data on these county juvenile facilities. Although these data are not yet available, information from a variety of sources shows:

- ✓ In 1996, over half of all minors in juvenile halls committed crimes against persons.
- ✓ Many county juvenile facilities are crowded, others are operating under court-ordered population caps or over rated capacity, and some have detainees sleeping on the floor.
- ✓ Most facilities are 25 to 50 years old and were not designed to confine today's serious and violent young offenders. Many facilities are dilapidated and simply "worn-out."
- ✓ The number of juveniles between the ages of 11 and 17 (responsible for 99 percent of juvenile arrests) is projected to increase by one-third in the next decade.

In FY 1997/98, the BOC established a Juvenile Facility Crowding Work Group to examine crowding issues. Comprised of chief probation officers, juvenile facility superintendents, Board members and a child advocate attorney, this group developed a process to assess the impact of crowded facilities and provided information and training that will assist the BOC in determining if local facilities are suitable for the continued confinement of minors.

Impact of Capacity Constraints

The State's adult jail system is facing an immediate and severe capacity crisis. Despite a successful construction effort that has more than doubled jail space in the past 18 years (Chapter 4), crowding has led to current court intervention in 22 jail systems. Figure One lists the counties under court-imposed population caps that compel the early release of over 22,000 inmates per month to make room for new arrivals. The facilities in these counties account for 68 percent of the 1997 ADP.

Because court-ordered population caps affect over two-thirds of the inmate population, ADP numbers vastly understate the need for jail bed space. The early release of over 22,000 inmates per month, coupled with the high number of unserved arrest warrants and growing percentage of felons who need maximum security housing, are better indicators that jail capacity is insufficient.

Although precise data are not currently available on county juvenile facilities, similar trends are reportedly occurring (e.g., population caps, insufficient maximum-security bed space, crowding).

Figure One

22 COUNTIES UNDER COURT- IMPOSED POPULATION CAPS Adult Local Detention Facilities	
COUNTIES	ADP
Los Angeles	20,718
San Diego	5,334
Orange	5,116
San Bernardino	4,680
Sacramento	3,452
Riverside	2,663
Fresno	2,149
Kern	2,041
Tulare	1,277
Stanislaus	1,045
Santa Barbara	939
Merced	512
Placer	436
Butte	404
Yolo	363
Shasta	350
Kings	338
El Dorado	314
Sutter	234
Tuolumne	114
Calaveras	51
Plumas	42
Total	52,572
68% of the 1997 ADP	

Although the Legislature provided funds in 1997/98 and 1998/99 to expand the capacity of local detention facilities, the BOC anticipates that demand for local adult and juvenile facility bed space will continue to exceed capacity. The BOC currently estimates that California may need to add 55,500 more jail beds and 6,000 more juvenile beds during the next 10 years (Chapter 3).

Figure Two

JAIL INCARCERATION RATE			
INMATE OCCUPANTS PER 10,000 OF GENERAL POPULATION			
COUNTY	GEN POP*	1997 JAIL ADP	1997 RATE
YUBA	61,200	351	57.4
MODOC	10,150	39	38.4
COLUSA	18,600	71	38.2
TULARE	358,300	1,277	35.6
DEL NORTE	28,400	101	35.6
IMPERIAL	142,700	500	35.0
TEHAMA	54,700	187	34.2
TRINITY	13,250	45	34.0
LAKE	55,100	185	33.6
INYO	18,300	61	33.3
KERN	634,400	2,041	32.2
SUTTER	76,100	234	30.7
MONO	10,500	32	30.5
SACRAMENTO	1,146,800	3,452	30.1
MADERA	113,500	340	30.0
ALAMEDA	1,398,500	4,132	29.5
SAN BERNARDINO	1,617,300	4,680	28.9
KINGS	117,700	338	28.7
MONTEREY	377,800	1,073	28.4
SANTA CLARA	1,671,400	4,741	28.4
FRESNO	778,700	2,149	27.6
MARIPOSA	15,950	44	27.6
MENDOCINO	86,000	234	27.2
GLENN	26,900	72	26.8
MERCED	202,000	512	25.3
STANISLAUS	425,400	1,045	24.6
LASSEN	33,850	83	24.5
SANTA CRUZ	247,200	600	24.3
SAN FRANCISCO	777,400	1,823	23.4
YOLO	154,900	363	23.4
SANTA BARBARA	400,800	939	23.4
STATEWIDE AVERAGE INCARCERATION RATE			23.3
SOLANO	378,600	843	22.3
SONOMA	432,800	962	22.2
SAN JOAQUIN	542,200	1,194	22.0
TUOLUMNE	52,200	114	21.8
LOS ANGELES	9,524,600	20,718	21.8
SAN BENITO	46,150	100	21.7
HUMBOLDT	126,100	272	21.6
SHASTA	163,300	350	21.4
EL DORADO	147,400	314	21.3
SAN DIEGO	2,763,400	5,663	20.5
VENTURA	727,200	1,500	20.6

PLUMAS	20,450	42	20.5
BUTTE	198,500	404	20.4
PLACER	215,600	436	20.2
SISKIYOU	44,300	87	19.6
ORANGE	2,705,300	5,116	18.9
RIVERSIDE	1,423,700	2,663	18.7
CONTRA COSTA	896,200	1,617	18.0
NEVADA	88,400	148	16.7
AMADOR	33,450	55	16.4
NAPA	121,200	194	16.0
SAN LUIS OBISPO	234,700	368	15.7
SAN MATEO	711,700	1,111	15.6
CALAVERAS	37,950	51	13.4
MARIN	243,300	289	11.9
STATE TOTAL**	32,957,000	76,894	23.3

* "Estimates of the Population of California Counties and the State," Department of Finance, July 1997

** Total includes Alpine and Sierra Counties (population: 4570)

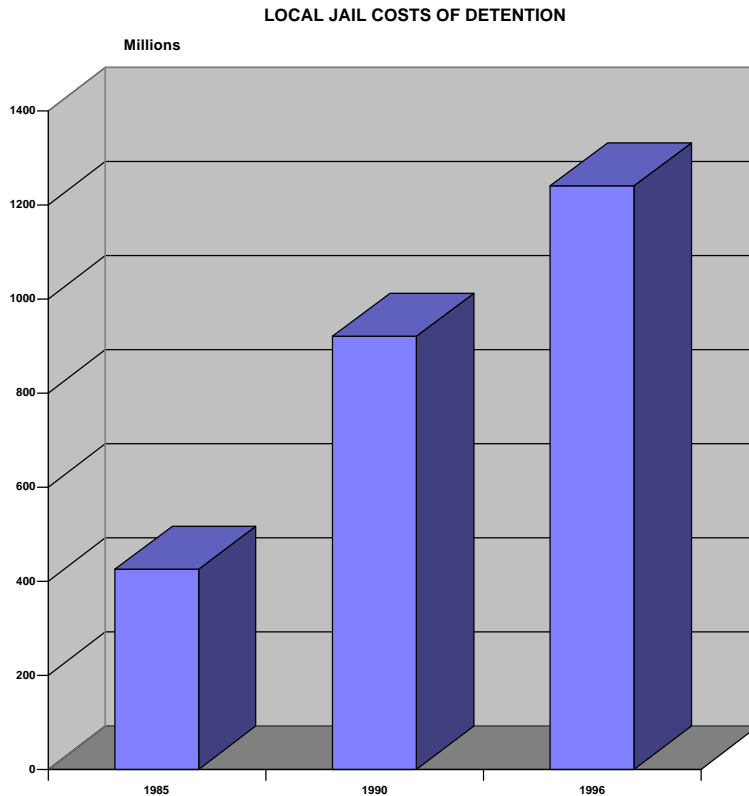
Figure Two shows county-specific jail ADP and incarceration rates for 1997, arrayed from the highest to the lowest incarceration rate (juvenile facility incarceration rates are not yet available but should be included in the next Legislative Report). Counties which contract to hold inmates from other jurisdictions may have higher than normal incarceration rates, while early releases may lead to lower rates in other counties. Regardless, there are significant differences between counties. The statewide incarceration rate is 23.3 persons per 10,000 general population.

Impact of Fiscal Constraints

In an environment of fiscal limitations, counties have found it increasingly difficult to fund the ongoing staffing and operating costs of detention facilities. Construction represents less than 10 percent of the cost of a jail over an average 30-year life span, while staffing and operating costs account for 90 percent or more of the total cost. Staffing deficiencies due to fiscal pressures affect detention facility operations in some jurisdictions.

Figure Three shows that county jail operational costs (excluding debt service) almost tripled between 1984/85 and 1995/96, increasing from \$446 million in 1984/85 (about 40,000 beds on-line) to \$1.24 billion in 1995/1996 (about 68,000 beds on-line). Per capita operational bed costs increased from \$11,000 to over \$18,000, about 5 percent per year.

Figure Three

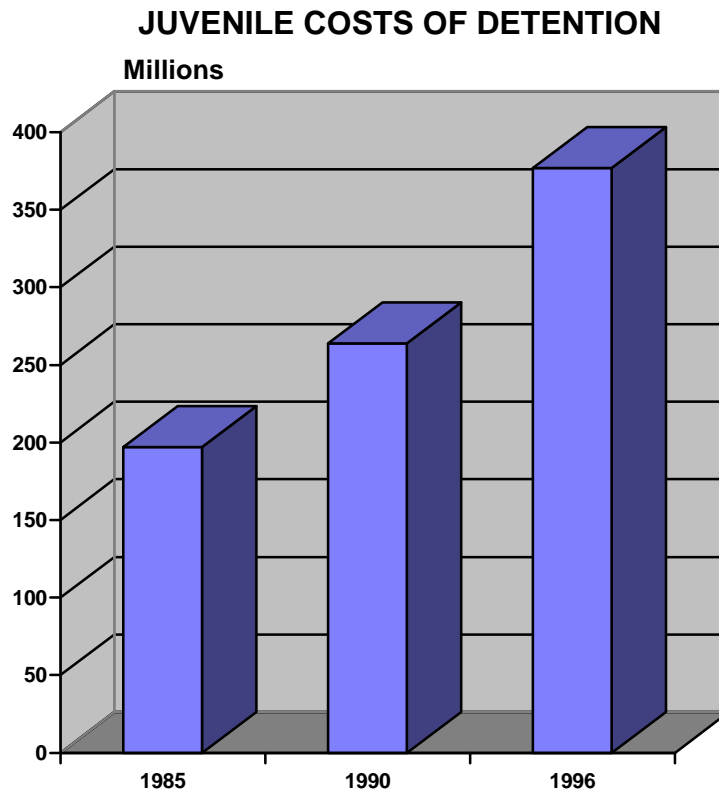


Source: State Controller's Annual Report,
Financial Transactions Concerning Counties of California, 1984/85 through 1995/96

Figure Four shows that operational costs (excluding debt service) for local juvenile facilities increased from \$1.96 million in 1984/85 (about 9,000 beds on-line) to \$3.76 million in 1995/96 (about 10,000 beds on-line). Per capita operational bed costs rose from \$21,000 to over \$37,000, about 5 percent a year.

Operational costs for county juvenile facilities are almost twice that of county jails, due to the significantly higher staffing costs. Minimum standards for juvenile facilities, which involve intensive programming, require one staff to every 10 minors. In contrast, there is no specific staffing ratio required for county jails where incarceration and security are the primary concerns.

Figure Four



Detention facilities are particularly vulnerable to fiscal constraints because proportionately high fixed operational costs (e.g., food, clothing, medical care, court transportation, and minimum staffing for safety and security) limit the ability to make discretionary cutbacks and still operate the facility. There simply are not many ways to cut detention costs without reducing local capacity by closing housing units or entire facilities.

One area where detention facilities have found some flexibility is in facility maintenance. By deferring some needed repairs and foregoing preventative maintenance activities, many adult and juvenile detention systems have been able to defer costs and redirect currently available funds. This temporary solution, however, is leading to premature deterioration of facilities and rapidly escalating deferred repair and maintenance costs (Chapter 3).

The Changing Environment of City Jails

In 1990, in an attempt to have cities share in the cost of county jails, the Legislature passed a measure that allows counties to impose booking fees on other entities using county jails. The unanticipated result of this law has been a proliferation of new, expanded or reopened city jails (primarily housing short-term inmates from arrest until court arraignment). City jail capacity has increased from 2,550 beds in 1989 to approximately 4,300 beds in 1997.

The cities of Alhambra, Baldwin Park, Bell, Irvine, Montebello, Palm Springs, San Bernardino, San Diego, Seal Beach and South Pasadena have contracted with private firms to operate their city jails. Although there is no statutory authority to privatize city jails, the State Attorney General's opinion is that cities (but not counties) may do so because nothing in law precludes this option. However, cities that privatize jail operations must comply with Penal Code Section 6031.6, which requires public entity oversight of contractors; adherence to all laws and regulations (including minimum jail operations and construction standards); and contract termination if deficiencies are not corrected.

Health Issues

Counties and cities continue to grapple with critical health care issues in jails and juvenile facilities. The closure or scaling back of community mental health facilities and treatment services, for example, has reduced resources for the escalating number of inmates with significant mental health disorders.

Local detention facilities continue to play an important role in the diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis (TB) in incarcerated individuals. Of the 4,059 cases of active TB reported in California in 1997, 94 (2.3 percent) were first diagnosed in local jails. Even one undiagnosed or improperly treated case of TB can result in a significant exposure to other inmates, staff, or visitors and transmission to the outside community.

TB, HIV and other communicable diseases are posing tough problems for health officials and local corrections administrators. Lifestyles that include alcohol/drug abuse, homelessness, and poor health care in general contribute to populations that are at high risk for communicable diseases. Effective screening programs in detention facilities offer an essential opportunity for identification and treatment, lessening the risks to other inmates, staff and the public.

Working closely with local health departments is critical to managing communicable diseases in detention facilities. Regulations for adult and juvenile detention facilities require collaboration on communicable disease management plans, and a recent law change requires treatment planning and advance notification when adult inmates with known or suspected active TB are transferred among jurisdictions.

By law, local health departments must conduct annual inspections of local detention facilities to assess compliance with state and local medical/mental health, nutritional and environmental health standards. In the ongoing effort to strengthen these inspections, BOC staff conducted several training sessions for local health inspectors and jail managers during this inspection cycle.